



“Walking the Labyrinth” is our theme for Lent 2017. It coordinates with Vicar Kristi’s Lenten Labyrinth on-line experience. **“Walking the Labyrinth”** is also the name of this painting by Iranian-born artist Freydoon Rassouli (www.rassouli.com) that we have chosen to represent our Lenten journey this year.

A number of you have signed up for the Lenten Labyrinth on-line experience of exploring Scripture and spiritual practices. Some of those spiritual practices will be highlighted during our Sunday morning learning hour and our Wednesday evening worship services throughout the six weeks of Lent.

The labyrinth is an ancient cross-cultural pattern found inscribed on rock faces, painted on pottery, imprinted on coins, carved into the earth, constructed of stones outdoors or tiles indoors all over the world.



The purpose and meaning of labyrinths has evolved over time. In some places they served as traps for malevolent spirits, e.g. King Minos of Crete had a labyrinth built to contain the half-bull, half-human Minotaur. In other places labyrinths were thought to present a sacred path to the home of a holy or divine ancestor. In yet other places labyrinths were pathways for ritual dances, as at Chartres Cathedral in France, where priests are reported to have led ritual dances on Easter Sunday. The Irish told stories of fairies dancing on the paths of the labyrinths. In later times labyrinths became symbolic of pilgrimages — a way to travel to a holy place for those who did not have the means to actually travel far. Today, some suggest that the labyrinth replicates the structures of the human brain!

Walking the labyrinth is a form of moving meditation, a path to contemplative prayer, to integrate body, mind and spirit, and encourage self-reflection. A labyrinth consists of a single path that leads from the outer edge in a circuitous way to the center. There are no tricks, no dead ends. The labyrinth is a spiritual tool to help you find your way to your deepest self and back out into the world with a better understanding of who you are. Walking the labyrinth functions as a metaphor for the journey of life and faith that each one of us is engaged in.

Join us as we explore this journey through worship, prayer, study, giving, serving, inviting and encouraging one another. **Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1. We will gather for a simple soup supper at 5:45pm, followed by worship with imposition of ashes and Holy Communion at 6:30pm.**

Blessings,
Pastor Ritva



Lent begins on March 1 with Ash Wednesday. Some of you will be joining us for the Lenten Labyrinth Online Experience for in-depth study of Scripture and exploration of spiritual well-being. Furthermore, our adult learning hour each week will be focused on spiritual practices.

Classical spiritual practices like prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are associated with the season of Lent. However, this year we will explore new ways to engage spirituality. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has provided a resource called the Wholeness Wheel. In the center of the wheel is our starting point: *"In baptism, a new creation in Christ."* We are continually becoming a new creation in the waters of baptism. A new creation means, *"being grounded and centered in Christ to love our neighbor as ourselves."*

The Wholeness Wheel identifies six areas of well-being: intellectual, social, emotional, physical, financial, and vocational. Each facet of your



life extends from our baptismal identity. Perhaps you are familiar with these or some may surprise you. You'll notice that spiritual is not listed. This is because spiritual well-being is all-encompassing, surrounding the entire Wholeness Wheel. Spiritual well-being is much more expansive than any one practice or action you can do. Spiritual well-being conveys wholeness and completeness, grounded in one's identity in Christ. The promises of God's unconditional love and grace claim you as a beloved child of God and fuel every area of your life. As you develop greater levels of well-being physically, emotionally, vocationally, etc. you also grow in spiritual well-being. It is easy to compartmentalize the spiritual from the physical or intellectual parts of our lives. But this model challenges us to live as whole persons, with careful attention and intention committed to living into the promises of baptism. You can learn more about this resource at: <https://www.porticobenefits.org/CallToLiveWell/FaithBasedWellBeing/TheWholenessWheel>.

As we begin the Lenten Labyrinth, I invite you to keep this understanding of spiritual well-being fresh in your minds. Also, mark your calendars for the upcoming adult learning opportunities, Sundays, from 9:15-10:15am:

- Mar 5 ***Spiritual Practice of Labyrinth***, Marion Patterson, Labyrinth Facilitator
- Mar 12 ***Spiritual Practice of Telling Your Story***, Vicar Kristi Grieder
- Mar 19 ***Spiritual Practice of Social Justice***, Rev. Paul Ostrem, Asst. to the Bishop, SE IA Synod
- Mar 26 ***Spiritual Practice of Healing***, TBD
- Apr 2 ***Spiritual Practice of Brokenness***, Rev. Wyatt Dagit, Chaplain, St. Luke's Hospital
- Apr 9 ***Spiritual Practice of the Cross***, Pastor Ritva Williams

Vicar Kristi Grieder



Amazingly, we are now in the season of Lent in the church year. I am always surprised how quickly this season comes upon us. As I think of this season, I am reminded that we use this time to consider the spiritual disciplines in our lives. Many

Christians use this time to add the practice of a new discipline or strengthen one which is already in place. I am not fond of the word discipline because it gives a feeling of punishment so I tend to think of it more as a good habit. So let me share with you the habit which I am going to strive to grow in during Lent and invite you to consider it also.

My spiritual habit that is going to be my growth area during Lent is contemplative prayer. I do a lot of praying but I do not always do a good job of having listening as a part of my praying. I tell God a lot of things, but I often do not take the time to quietly listen to God. So I am going to focus on making space to listen to God in addition to me sharing my thoughts with God.

I would be interested in hearing from some of you about what spiritual habits you may already use or consider focusing on during this Lent. I will be talking with the youth about this subject as well during Lent. May we all use this season as an opportunity to continue to grow in our relationship with the Lord.

Mark Howland, Youth & Young Adult Minister

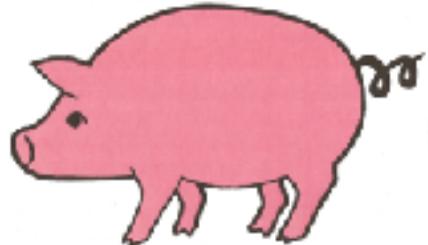
Sunday, March 5

Meet **Muddy Cookie**,
our pig with a purpose!

S/he will be on hand during worship to tell you how your fasting for Lent can help fight hunger.

Muddy Cookie's goal is to raise \$500.

1/2 will go to ELCA World Hunger. 1/2 will help fund anti-hunger programs here in Southeastern Iowa.





Practice Discipleship in Daily Life

Join us as we explore the seven faith practices that are the foundation for following Jesus in daily life: Worship, Prayer, Encourage, Study, Give, Invite, Serve.

WORSHIP

Sunday morning services at 8:00 and 10:30am

Wednesday Lenten Worship, March 8-April 5:

5:45pm Soup Supper

6:30pm Holden Evening Prayer with Holy Communion

Would you like to sing with us? Join us Wednesday nights following worship at 7:15-8:15pm. **Childcare is provided during rehearsals. Following rehearsal, there is a craft beer exchange!** We are a fun group. Come join us. All are welcome!

STUDY

Children's Time: Sundays at 9:15am in Children's Place (downstairs). Second Sunday of the month: *Children's Time & Music with David.*

Confirmation for Middle School Youth: Wednesdays at 7:15pm, Room 9

High School Discussion Group: Sundays at 9:15am in the Youth Room. Bring a friend!

Mar 5 – TBD

Mar 12, 19 – Doesn't meet (spring break)

Adult Learning: Sundays 9:15am, Fellowship Hall
See page 2.

Bring Your Bible to Brunch, the 1st & 3rd Sundays each month, at Lion Bridge, 59 16th Ave.

Join Pastor Ritva and John as they explore the lectionary readings for the following Sunday.

Men's Study Group (Mondays at 8am) at Mr. Beans in Marion.

Women's Bible Study, Tuesdays, at 10am, Making Sense of the Cross. On March 14 stay after for the Women 50+ Luncheon at 11:30am!

Lenten Labyrinth Online Experience –

February 22-April 19: Our online community for an in-depth study of Scripture and exploration of spiritual practices this Lenten season.

Led by Vicar Kristi.

INVITE

Finger Labyrinth Workshop – Saturday, March 4, 4-6:00pm at Iowa Ceramic Center (Cherry Building- 329 10th Ave. SE Suite 117). Make your own labyrinth to fit your hand size. Cost: \$25 includes all materials and use of kiln. Please register by emailing Vicar Kristi, kvh.grieder@gmail.com by Wednesday, March 1. First-come, first serve. Event is limited to 25 participants.

WomenWineWisdom – Thursday, March 9, 6pm at Naso's (453 7th Ave, Marion). RSVP Amy at amykuhn2@aol.com or 270-6365.

Men's Fellowship Group – Tuesday, March 21, 6:30pm at The Quarter Barrel (616 2nd Ave SE).

Youth Activities:

Wednesday, March 8, 7pm

High School Youth Gathering at the Vander Sandens

Wednesday, March 22, 8:15pm

Mentors Meet with Confirmation students

Thursday, March 23, 6:30pm

Dinner with Mark @ Rock Bar American Grill (219 2nd Ave. SE)

Sunday, March 26, 11:30am

High School Lunch/Study/Discussion Time in the Fellowship Hall

SERVE

Operation Backpack – On Ash Wednesday (3/1) We WILL be packing food after worship at approximately 7:30. The packing should take about 30 minutes depending on how many helpers we have. If you've never participated, this would be a great time to see what OBP is like!

Thank you for the plastic bags. We don't need any more at this time. HyVee donated a case of 2,000 sacks! (Thanks, Amy, for making that happen.)

There are plenty of spots available for food pick up at HACAP and delivery to Grant Wood through the end of the school year. Please sign up if you are able, and thanks to those of you who have helped out so faithfully all school year! <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084fa8ae2da31-operation>

Quilting Ministry: Contact Barbara Kusler – 319-826-3794 (home).

GIVE

Consider donating to our St. Stephen's Endowment Fund, a permanent pool of resources set apart from our operating budget to secure the financial future of St. Stephen's beyond the lifetimes of our current members. (See enclosed brochure.)

LORD Hear Our Prayers



Members

Steve Thomas
Mick Butz
Lee Tramutolo
Pete Hansen
Joan Petersen
Toni Lee
Judy Nye
Harriet Hemphill
Suzanne Schmidt
Vicky Johnson
Dave Coates

Shirley Coates
Dave Goepfert
Cathy Goepfert
David Hagen
Berdella Pitz
Doris Henderson
Mary Rose Barnotes

Friends

Pat Schnitzel
Glenna Houtz
Michelle Stafford
Jerime Mitchell
Alice Adams
Phyllis Stark

Relatives

Trent Rosberg

We pray for the family and friends of:

Terry Swalve, Laura Sagers' father, who died Tuesday, January 31.

Arnold J. Ditch, brother of Delbert Ditch, his daughters, Deb Ender, Nancy Hlas & Linda Ruby, who passed away on Wednesday, February 8.

Serving in the military and/or overseas

Nick Wheeler, Army National Guard (grandson of Gail & Dan Husmann)

Alex Grafft, Army National Guard

Please contact the office or use a Prayer Request card (in your pew rack) to place your loved one's name on this list for two weeks and/or request prayer of the Monday Prayer Team. If your loved one desires a pastoral visit, please contact Pastor Ritva.

We welcome:

Tinley Marie Franzen, who was baptized Sunday, February 5. Tinley is the granddaughter of Barb and Terry Griggs.

March is National Professional Social Work Month

March is National Professional Social Workers Month, a time to recognize social workers and thank them for all they do. At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we're grateful for our many social workers who have dedicated their lives to serving their communities!

Maybe you've never had a social worker involved in your life. Yet, whether you realize it or not, you've had the benefit of their behind-the-scenes work in your community. Social workers help people help themselves in overcoming life's most difficult circumstances or managing challenges of everyday living: poverty, abuse, mental illness, depression, addiction, disability, and many other situations.

Thank you to all of Iowa's social workers, especially those at LSI. We're proud of you.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Finding Calm

Nine-year-old JD lost track of how many days he was removed from school. He would throw

things in the classroom or rip up his papers. Almost every day he was separated from his classmates and taken to the "Intervention Room," an empty classroom where children have the opportunity to calm down and refocus. But nothing worked.

That's when JD's dad, Jerry, turned to LSI. With his team of LSI therapists and caseworkers, JD has found an interesting way to control his anger: his rock collection.

He's always had a love of gathering 'cool, unique-looking' rocks, and AriAnna, his LSI therapist, has incorporated that into their sessions together. "Rocks can be used as great relaxation tools, and he spent a lot of time pouring over the rocks I had in my office," AriAnna said.

JD started his rock collection with AriAnna and began bringing it to school with him. He carries his favorites in his 'positive choice pouch.' "When I hold them in my hand and breathe, it calms me down," says JD.

Jerry says LSI's help has been life-changing for his son. "He's making better choices now. I'm really proud of him."

This year, JD has been removed from class only once, and for only 15 minutes. "He has a different identity at school now," AriAnna says. "He's creative and insightful. Now, he knows what he sees in himself, and he wants to share that with others."

*Men's Fellowship – Westdale Bowling Center
Tuesday, February 7*



*Women, Wine, Wisdom
at Ramsey's Wine
Bistro – Thursday,
February 9*



Women 50+ Valentine's Luncheon – Tuesday, February 14



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, ELCA
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Pastoral Intern
Office Manager
Music Director
Piano Accompanist
Premises Keeper
Council President
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Sunday Morning Schedule

8:00am First Worship Service
9:00am Coffee & Fellowship
9:15am Education Hour
Through August 20:
10:00am Second Worship Service
Beginning August 27:
10:30am Second Worship Service

Wednesday Evening Schedule

6:30pm Worship



**St. Stephen's
Lutheran Church, ELCA**

To Know, Live, and Share Christ.
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St. Stephen's Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a **Reconciling in Christ** congregation that welcomes diversity, which enriches, nurtures, and challenges our life and ministry.

***Come and join us as
we know, live, and
share Christ
together in love.***

